

Calgary · FIFTH ESTATE

Alberta men accused in plot to murder Mounties saw undercover cops as 'girls' who could help: court records

Female undercover officers befriended protesters acting as 'security' for Coutts border blockade

[Meghan Grant](#), [Rachel Ward](#) · CBC News · Posted: Sep 07, 2022 10:49 AM MT | Last Updated: October 5



Alberta RCMP issued an advisory against travel along Highway 4, from south of Lethbridge to the Coutts border crossing, during the anti-vaccine-mandate protests and blockades in January and February. (Submitted by Jake Zacharias)

Newly released records show police believed the Alberta men now accused of plotting to murder RCMP officers debated having two women smuggle a hockey bag filled with guns into a protest against pandemic-related restrictions, suggesting they would go unnoticed by police because they were "girls."

However, those two women were actually undercover police officers.

The next day, RCMP launched a rare "imminent harm" wiretap, which is permitted to be executed without a judge's sign-off when there is an immediate threat to safety.

The blockades and protests at the Coutts border crossing in southern Alberta began on Jan. 29 and ended following the Feb. 14 pre-dawn execution of warrants on trailers and property, which resulted in RCMP seizing more than a dozen firearms, as well as ammunition and body armour.

- [**Coutts arrests: new details on the men and women charged in border blockade**](#)

In the aftermath of the searches, 14 people were charged criminally, with four men — Jerry Morin, 41; Chris Lysak, 48; Chris Carbert, 45; and Anthony Olienick, 40 — facing the most serious offence: conspiracy to murder RCMP officers.

The four men also face a weapons and mischief charge.

Additionally, Olienick faces a charge related to an allegation he had a pipe bomb that police say they seized from his rural property in the Municipality of Willow Creek outside Claresholm, south of Calgary.

- [**At the border: The trucks and tractors have left the border town of Coutts, Alta. But for some, the protest never ended**](#)

These new details are revealed in search warrant applications, also known as ITOs, which describe the two key investigative tactics — the undercover operation and the wiretaps — used to justify charges, raids and further searches.

Four ITOs were unsealed and filed with Lethbridge Provincial Court on Wednesday after a legal challenge from a group of news organizations, including CBC, Global, CTV, the Globe and Mail,

Postmedia and the New York Times.

Although the documents were unsealed, redactions and an interim publication ban prevented many of the details from being reported — most notably, information gleaned from wiretaps, statements made by the four accused to police and inflammatory statements made to undercover officers.

The media consortium will have a full hearing on Sept. 29 to determine if the publication ban will be lifted for remaining redactions.

Police allege guns to be shipped in hockey bag

The unsealed documents show that when they were filed, RCMP believed Olienick, Carbert and Morin were part of a sub-group of protesters who "were arming themselves for a standoff against police."

Police believed three of the four men facing conspiracy to murder charges knew each other and made plans prior to the Coutts border blockade, according to the documents.

On Feb. 11, two female undercover officers — referred to in the document by pseudonyms — posed as protesters and befriended Olienick and Carbert at a Coutts bar called Smuggler's Saloon. The two officers reported that they had witnessed the planning of a suspected shipment of guns in a hockey bag that night, according to the undercover officers' notes.

The documents say Carbert then asked Olienick if he "preferred to use guitar cases like they usually did," but "Olienick said the package was too big and they needed a hockey bag."

The plan was to meet Morin at a check stop along the train tracks near the protest site, where he would hand over a "heavy" delivery.

The documents detail a conflict over whether the undercover officers would help. Carbert felt the hockey bag would be too heavy for the women to lift, but Olienick believed it was a perfect cover.

"Olienick believed that the police would not think much of it if [the two women] carried the bag because they were 'girls,'" reads one of the ITOs.

Officers ordered to leave suspected 'gun exchange'

When the undercover officers told the men they were "fine with guns," the document states that neither Carbert nor Olienick denied the bag contained firearms.

Although the undercover officers did arrive at the checkpoint with Olienick, Carbert and Morin, their supervisor told them to leave and not be involved in what they believed was going to be a "gun exchange," the records say, so they did not see the hockey bag.

Based on the undercover officers' observations, RCMP "[believed] Morin provided firearms to Olienick and Carbert for the purpose of using those firearms to shoot at and kill police officers."



From left to right: Chris Carbert, 44; Anthony Olienick, 39; Jerry Morin, 40; and Christopher Lysak, 48. They are each accused of conspiring to murder RCMP officers near Coutts, Alta., during the border blockade and protests earlier this year. (Carbert/Facebook, Coutts Convoy Restart/Facebook, Morin/Facebook, Instagram)

The situation at Coutts was intensifying leading up to the Valentine's Day police raids.

The day after the hockey bag handover, RCMP launched an imminent harm intercept, meaning they could set up wiretaps of the suspects without the typically required court authorization,

because they believed their officers were in danger.

But under the heading "Imminent Harm Interception of Private Communication" in one of the ITOs, 54 paragraphs and subparagraphs are blacked out with redactions.

'Arming themselves for a standoff'

The four released ITOs contain very little information about the fourth man, Lysak. There is a fifth ITO, which prosecutors successfully argued should remain sealed because it relates to an ongoing investigation.

Social media posts have connected two of the men to a network called Diagon, an American-style militia movement birthed in Nova Scotia with white supremacist beliefs.

Members of the network want to establish a white nationalist state through violence, according to experts in extremism.

The social media accounts belonging to Carbert and Lysak connect the pair to Diagon, including a photo of Lysak posing with the group's founder, Jeremy MacKenzie.

Two Diagon patches were found on body armour seized during the execution of RCMP search warrants at Coutts on Feb. 14.





This cache of firearms, body armour and ammunition was found in three trailers near the blockade of the Canada-U.S. border, police say. (Submitted by Alberta RCMP)

The main searches were conducted on trailers on the property of Joanne Person, halfway between Smuggler's Saloon in Coutts and the protest site.

Person, who faces less serious charges connected to the blockade, had been hosting several of the protesters, including Olienick, Carbert and two other men who were not identified in the documents. A gun registered to Lysak was seized from Person's property during the search.

Men involved in sophisticated security team

By the second week in February, RCMP had identified a sophisticated security team that allegedly included Olienick, Morin and Carbert.

Olienick kept watch over several live surveillance feeds that showed RCMP officers' movements within the protest area and at various checkpoints, undercover officers noted.

Those officers spotted body armour, a laminated map and the live video feed in Olienick's truck, which led to police commenting on "the sophistication of the security role," according to the ITOs.





RCMP are seen policing the Coutts, Alta., border protests on Feb. 9. (Nassima Way/CBC)

Olienick, who communicated with protest leadership through an intermediary, told undercover officers that protesters had "access to hundreds of firearms and ammunition within Coutts," the court records allege.

"I believe that Olienick's involvement as security within the Coutts blockade involves structure, hierarchy and organization," the document says.

Police also believed they would find "documents and data related to planning, organization and operations of the protest group's security for the Coutts blockade" at one of Olienick's properties.

The search warrant application also alleges Olienick disclosed that protesters had brought in more semi tractors and farm equipment to "barricade themselves from the RCMP because they were breaching the borders of the town."

'Search by night' raids

Late on Feb. 13, police arrested Lysak outside Smuggler's Saloon and charged him with uttering threats toward a police officer.

By this time, police had applied to search Person's property and stated in their application they wished to do so at night, when fewer protesters would be present.

"I believe there will be a significant risk to police, public and protestor safety when executing this search warrant, including protestors attempting to swarm, obstruct and attack police," the document said.



Protesters from the blockade at the border crossing near Coutts, Alta., pass through the Milk River blockade site on Highway 4 on Feb. 15, as police officers look on. (CBC)

In the early hours of Feb. 14, officers raided trailers on Person's property and seized a weapons cache, including a handgun registered to Lysak. Olienick and Carbert were arrested in the course of the raids on the property.

'This is war'

The morning after the raids, police surveilled Morin's home and followed him discreetly for nearly an hour and a half before pulling his truck over in Calgary at 12:23 p.m.

Police found two weapons in his truck, but also applied for a search warrant for Morin's home because, the documents allege, he had disclosed in previous days that he had more firearms than what police recovered during his arrest. Another gun was seized at Morin's house, according to the ITOs.

The ITOs also referenced social media posts made by some of the accused, including Morin, [who posted a video to Facebook during the protests](#).

In a video titled "Call to Action" posted the day before his arrest, Morin encouraged others to join the protest.

"This is war," Morin said.

Investigators believed group had more members, weapons

The RCMP's investigation into the alleged planned attack continued after they arrested the four men. Police also applied to search a rural property belonging to Olienick near Claresholm. Officers said they believed he had guns there and "was part of a group that spoke about using firearms against police."

"Police have not yet identified all members of the group and I believe there were members of the group that were not present in Coutts," police said.

Police also learned that in the months leading up to the protests, Olienick had ordered different accessories for a handgun, despite not having one registered in his name, according to the documents.

According to the records, this included magazine holders, a holster that could accommodate a handgun with an attached light, and a shot timer, which police noted are typically used for exercises "intended to improve shooting speed and accuracy while shooting quickly."

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Police believed Olienick had equipment stored outside of Coutts, which members of his "group" were planning to transport into the protest area.

"I believe equipment intended for Coutts did not arrive," wrote one investigating officer.

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Clarifications

- After publication, the court issued additional redactions. This article has been updated.
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